

Message Text

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62

ACTION AF-08

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R 240945Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7978

INFO AMEMBASSY LLONGWE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS GABORONE 0766

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BC, RH

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA DENIES CONNECTION WITH MATTHEWS

PRESS INTERVIEW CALLING FOR "PEACEFUL CHANGE" IN

SOUTH AFRICA

1. APRIL 22 EDITION OF GOVERNMENT-PUBLISHED BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS CARRIED FRONT PAGE STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT REGARDING AN INTERVIEW WITH FORMER ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL JOE MATTHEWS PRINTED IN APRIL 18 ISSUE OF JOHANNESBURG SUNDAY TIMES. INTERVIEW, CONDUCTED BY JHP SERFONTEIN, IDENTIFIED MATTHEWS, AS A "ONE TIME REVOLUTIONARY AND ANC EXECUTIVE." IN INTERVIEW MATTHEWS IS QUOTED AS STRESSING THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA HAVE MADE "ARMED FORCE UNNECESSARY" AND ENCOURAGING A "STRATEGY OF PEACE AND REASON." HE ALSO CALLED FOR A MORE SYMPATHETIC

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APPROCH TO TRANSKEI "INDEPENDENCE."

2. TEXT OF DAILY NEWS ARTICLE ON THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: MATTHEWS VIEWS ENTIRELY HIS OWN:

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HAS ISSUED THE FOLLOWING
STATEMENT IN RELATION TO AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO A SOUTH
AFRICAN NEWSPAPER BY A FORMER TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL.

3. THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS
ENQUIRIES FROM MANY QUARTERS AS TO WHETHER THE VIEWS
EXPRESSED IN THE "SUNDAY TIMES" OF 18 APRIL, 1976 BY
MR. JOE MATTHEWS IN ANY WAY REFLECT BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT
POLICY. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT MR. MATTHEAS WAS UNTIL
RECENTLY A SENIOR OFFICER IN THE BOTSWANA PUBLIC SERVICE.

4. NEEDLESS TO SAY, MR. MATTHEWS' VIEW REGARDING THE
SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA BEARS NO RELATION WHATSOEVER
TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THE MATTER. UNLIKE MR.
MATTHEWS, THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT COMPLETELY REJECTS THE
BANTUSTAN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA.

5. AS THE PRESIDENT, SIR SERETSE KHAMA, SAID IN HIS
ADDRESS TO THE BDP CONFERENCE LAST SATURDAY THE BOTSWANA
GOVERNMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT "THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA
LIES IN BALKANISATION OR IN INSTITUTIONISED APARTHEID IN THE
FORM OF SO-CALLED INDEPENDENT BANTUSTANS."

6. THE BANTUSTAN POLICY IS IMPRACTICABLE, UNFAIR, AND
INHUMAN. FOR THIS REASON, THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT AND,
INDEED, THE PEOPLE OF BOTSWANA (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MR.
MATTHEWS) WILL NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT.

7. MR. MATTHEWS BELIEVES THAT FOLLOWING THE EXIT OF THE
PORTUGUESE FROM AFRICA IT IS "UNNECESSARY TO USE ARMED
STRUGGLE AS THE ONLY MEANS OF PRODUCING MEANINGFUL CHANGES
IN SOUTH AFRICA."

8. THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA HAS ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS
STATED THAT IT DEPLORES VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF RESOLVING THE
PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. BUT THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS
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THE DECISION OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO RESORT TO
VIOLENCE, AND IT CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THE PORTUGUESE
PRESENCE IN AFRICA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 50 FRUITLESS
YEARS WHICH THE A C SPENT TRYING TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE
IN SOUTH AFRICA BY PEACEFUL MEANS.

9. MOREOVER, IF THE RHODESIAN EXPERIENCE IS ANYTHING
TO GO BY, THE PORTUGUESE EXIT FROM AFRICA DOES NOT SEEM

AS MUCH SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENTS
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AS MR. MATTHEWS BELIEVES IT HAS. END
TEXT.

10 ALSO ON APRIL 22, STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
BOTSWANA AND SWAZILAND HELD A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION IN GABORONE
CALLING FOR THE EXPULSION OF MATTHEWS FOR ADVOCATING
"SUPPORT FOR SOUTH AFRICA." AN ESTIMATED 200 STUDENTS
MARCHED FROM THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS THROUGH DOWNTOWN TO
THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT CARRYING SIGNS DENOUNCING
MATTHEWS AS AFOREIGNER AND CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO
THROW HIM OUT. CROWD WAS ORDERLY AND DISPERSED WITHOUT
INCIDENT UPON RETURN TO THE CAMPUS.
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